ARMY RECORDKEEPING REDESIGN OVERVIEW

1. BACKGROUND.

    a. Events involving the lack of records following the Gulf War prompted the Vice-Chief of Staff, Army, and the Director of the Army Staff to direct a review of the Army's process for creating and preserving records. The current records process no longer supported the requirement for two primary reasons: 1) the loss of the military and civilian administrative infrastructure due to downsizing and, 2) the proliferation of personal computers allowing soldiers and action officers to prepare and process their own actions. Proponency for Army records was transferred from the DA DISC4 to the DA DCSPER, resulting in DCSPER direction to collect contingency records; redesign the records program as needed; and to begin addressing the handling of electronic records. The transfer of proponency to DA DCSPER did not require a corresponding transfer of proponency below DA.

    b. DA DCSPER and TAG sponsored a six-month series of professionally facilitated groupware sessions involving records, non-records and functional personnel across the Army to redesign the recordkeeping program. The goals were: 1) all important records are preserved; 2) all important records are retrievable; 3) the recordkeeping process is simple; and 4) the recordkeeping process is part of the daily business process. The effort culminated in a redesign process wherein the 36 retention periods of the current system are combined into two retention periods for actions officers and soldiers, Keep or Transfer. The administrative burden of calculating specific retention periods is transferred from offices and units to a contractor operated records holding area furnished with web-based automation and technology tools. The redesign methodology advantageously positions the Army for the transformation of its recordkeeping process for further advances evolving in the area of electronic information warehousing.

2. FACTS.

    a. Recordkeeping redesign emphasizes the management of longer-term, more important records and lets the business process manage the shorter term records. Longer-term more important records have a residual value to the Army and to the Government after the records are no longer needed by the business process. Shorter term records generally are used only by the business process.

    b. Records currently required to be retained for six-years or less will be designated Keep records and kept until no longer needed for operations or the business process, not to exceed six-years, and then destroyed by offices/units. Records required to be kept over six-years will be designated Transfer records and transferred to the records holding area where their specific holding period will be calculated when at which point they will be destroyed at the RHA or retired to the National Archives. Certain records of less than six-years involving individual rights and interests or certain Federal requirements will be treated as Transfer records.

c. Moving to the "Keep" concept allows 77% of the number of records types to be destroyed locally, thereby providing better opportunity to manage the longer-term and permanent records transferred into the records holding system.

d. Paper and electronic records created by deployed units in contingency operations are being collected monthly under redesign following a quick reference guide prepared by The Adjutant General (TAG) that outlines specific records that, as a minimum, are to be created and preserved. Upon declaration of a contingency operation, a pre-positioned message is released from the Pentagon Army Operations Center delineating specific transfer locations.

e. The Army Records Information Management System (ARIMS) portion of redesign leverages Internet and electronic mail capabilities for managing electronic records as well as providing a host of automated services. ARIMS contains capacity for storing electronic records of commands and activities not having the capability and uses direct-pointers to those having their own electronic records storage. ARIMS features one centralized inventory of Army records indexed by records holding area (RHA) contractors to the folder level for paper and document level for electronic. ARIMS reduces the manual processes associated with traditional records management by providing automated office files lists; automatic assignment of disposition and retention; on-demand printing of folder labels; system-generated notices of destruction or retirement.

f. Consolidation of the 105 Army records holding areas into a system of six or less, contractor-operated regional records holding areas reduces the annual expense attributable to recordkeeping by $3.3 million annually while removing records from many unsuitable local facilities. It allows local Army records managers to manage creation and preservation while consolidated RHA contractors apply retention, index records to the ARIMS centralized records inventory and manage holdings.

g.   As the Army deploys the new recordkeeping process, there will be a worldwide availability of orientation and training materials for both military and civilian personnel. The distance learning program will consist of a series of instructional materials suitable for real-time delivery over the internet and easily distributed via CD-ROM or other removable media; are based on commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software packages; provide instruction on the redesigned recordkeeping system to both end users and records managers; fulfill the requirement of DoD Directive 5015.2 to advise all employees annually of records management responsibilities; provide instruction to Army records managers on the use of the Army Records Information Management System (ARIMS); and can be easily modified and updated by the government as the new recordkeeping system matures.

3. STATUS.

- The retentions and dispositions of the current MARKS recordkeeping system have been converted to the K and T methodology. Actions for the 1,300 records series requiring Archives approval to K retention are under review at the National Archives and Records Administration.
- The Quick Reference Guide for contingency operations is prepared and ready for electronic and hard-stock distribution upon the declaration of the next contingency.
- ARIMS is undergoing final review prior to release in the early Fall 01.

- The statement of work (SOW) for records holding area (RHA) consolidation has been coordinated with the MACOMs and is in the acquisition channel.
- The first phase of the Distance Learning contract is completed, offering automated learning technology recommendations and plan.

4. SUMMARY.

Recordkeeping Redesign focuses resources on important, longer-term and permanent records; simplifies recordkeeping for individuals through the K and T methodology rather than 36 separate retention periods; transfers the burden from soldiers and action officers in applying retention and disposition to important records; provides finding aids, research and automation tools to records managers; contains capacity for indexing and storing electronic records; employs web-based technology for more efficient/economic management of records overall through a system of consolidated records holding areas.